



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT
OF **JUVENILE JUSTICE**

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE FROM THE

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

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Juvenile Offenders Taught to “SHOW THEM WE CARE” in Gainesville

(GAINESVILLE - GA) The Girl Scouts from Troop #965 helped brighten the Bell Minor Nursing Home in Gainesville this week without anyone even seeing a green uniform walk through the door. About a dozen industrious Girl Scouts sent their hand-made fleece blankets to warm the residents at Bell Minor Nursing Home as part of a service learning project at a Department of Juvenile Justice secure facility in Atlanta. The Girl Scouts of Troop #965 are all young offenders in custody at the Metro Regional Youth Detention Center (RYDC).

“We call their learning project, ‘*Show Them We Care*,’ said DJJ Victim and Volunteer Services Director Latera Davis. “Our project goal is to increase awareness toward seniors. Our Office of Victim Services is working with our Division of Education and Reentry Services to make this service project a success,” Director Davis said.

Young men from DJJ’s Vocational Program at Augusta Youth Development Campus (YDC) hand-built a wooden flower bed box where residents at Bell Minor Nursing Home can store their new fleece blankets. The overall box and blanket project concept was created by Commissioner Avery D. Niles to ‘*Show Them We Care*’. DJJ formally “adopted” Bell Minor Nursing Home in Gainesville through department service learning and outreach projects last year.

“It’s a chance to educate our youth about respecting Georgia’s aging population,” said Commissioner Niles. “Our objective is to help DJJ’s young offenders develop an understanding of the issues that impact our aging population and to empathize with the elderly receiving medical attention and living assistance in hospitals and nursing homes,” the Commissioner said.

As Commissioner Niles personally helped make the deliveries to the nursing home, residents voiced their appreciation for the gifted blankets.. “it was a good day”.. and were impressed with the care and skills that went into making their heartwarming gifts. Bell Minor staff said no one can know how something as personal as a handmade blanket can make such a big difference to brighten a senior’s day.

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

"Too often communities forget about our aging seniors," said Commissioner Niles. "We start with this simple way to give back and show aging adults that someone cares. We hope that eventually hands-on projects like this will encourage our youth to think about other serious needs in their communities on their own."

The Staff of Bell Minor Nursing Home said they were "...Grateful for continued support from Commissioner Niles and the Department of Juvenile Justice". Commissioner Niles thanked Governor Nathan Deal for his continued support for Service Learning Projects like this being launched by the Department of Juvenile Justice. "*Show Them We Care*" is an ongoing reminder of how our youth can give back to the community while being educated about the unique needs of other community members," said Commissioner Niles.

The Commissioner says Governor Nathan Deal and First Lady Sandra Deal launched their own project in 2011 for giving back to the state and the communities they love. The Deal's call it "With a Servant's Heart". Commissioner Niles says the cornerstone concept of First Lady Sandra Deal's project lends constant inspiration to DJJ's efforts to help young offenders reenter their communities after serving out court orders. Volunteerism, community involvement and outreach are the foundation of "With a Servant's Heart".

"When we reach out to become involved in helping mold a new beginning for another person, we bring hope for that individual and we in turn receive joy. My goal is that every Georgian, no matter the background or circumstance, commit to creating awareness for the importance of volunteerism by allowing one's actions to speak louder than words, give with a servant's heart." ***First Lady Sandra Deal***

For more information about "With a Servant's Heart" please visit <https://gov.georgia.gov/initiatives> or go to <http://nathanddeal.org/servantsheart/>

For more information about special projects from the DJJ Office of Victim Services, visit us on the web at <http://www.djjnewsandviews.org/victimservices> .

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